

**SENATE, No. 1412**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “New Jersey Affordable Housing Internet Portal Study Commission.”

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a commission to study the creation of an  
2 affordable housing Internet portal.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6  
7 1. a. There is established in, but not of, the Department of  
8 Community Affairs, an advisory commission to be known as the  
9 “New Jersey Affordable Housing Internet Portal Study  
10 Commission.” The commission shall consist of 11 members as  
11 follows:

12 (1) two members of the Senate, one appointed by the Senate  
13 President, and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; and  
14 two members of the General Assembly, one appointed by the  
15 Speaker of the general Assembly, and one appointed by the  
16 Assembly Minority Leader;

17 (2) the Commissioner of Community Affairs, the Executive  
18 Director of the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the  
19 Executive Director of the Council on Affordable Housing, and the  
20 Chief Technology Officer, or their designees, who shall serve ex-  
21 officio; and

22 (3) three public members, who shall be appointed by the  
23 Governor no later than the 30th day after the effective date of this  
24 act, as follows: one person upon the recommendation of the New  
25 Jersey League of Municipalities, one person upon the  
26 recommendation of the New Jersey Association of Counties, and  
27 one person upon the recommendation of a non-profit affordable  
28 housing advocacy group.

29 b. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable after  
30 the appointment of its members. Vacancies in the membership of  
31 the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original  
32 appointments were made.

33 c. Members of the commission shall serve without  
34 compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses  
35 incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds  
36 made available to the commission for its purposes.

37 d. The Commissioner of Community Affairs, or the  
38 Commissioner’s designee, shall serve as chairperson of the  
39 commission. The commission shall select a vice-chairperson from  
40 among the members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who  
41 need not be a member of the commission.

42 e. The commission shall examine the feasibility of creating an  
43 affordable housing Internet portal that includes the following:

44 (1) complete, up-to-date accounting of available affordable  
45 housing, including publicly supported housing, privately supported  
46 housing, and housing supported by non-profit organizations and  
47 religious groups;

1 (2) an affordable housing checklist, including links to  
2 information deemed necessary by the commission;

3 (3) a streamlined process by which individuals may apply for  
4 subsidized housing with the ability to:

5 (a) complete the application on a smartphone;

6 (b) compile all of the paperwork required for submission by an  
7 applicant by municipal, county, and State housing agencies, agents,  
8 and authorities, as customized by pre-selected user preferences;

9 (c) track the process of an application and provide digital  
10 updates through email and text messaging to applicants; and

11 (d) complete a financial and housing literacy educational  
12 module;

13 (4) the creation of an automated “chatbot” which can answer  
14 frequently asked questions in real-time, and direct those seeking  
15 affordable housing to a hotline for additional information when  
16 necessary;

17 (5) the creation of a feedback portal which shall be monitored to  
18 consider potential improvements for the Internet website on a  
19 regular basis; and

20 (6) information available for municipalities on zoning best  
21 practices, including ways to integrate affordable housing into the  
22 existing municipal infrastructure.

23 f. The commission shall hold not less than three public  
24 hearings, with no less than one public hearing each in the northern,  
25 central, and southern regions of the State.

26  
27 2. The commission may issue any interim reports it deems  
28 appropriate and shall submit a final report of its findings and  
29 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant  
30 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than nine  
31 months after the date of the commission organization meeting.

32  
33 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon  
34 the issuance of the final commission report.

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37 STATEMENT

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39 This bill would establish the “New Jersey Affordable Housing  
40 Internet Portal Study Commission.” The purpose of the commission  
41 will be to examine the feasibility of creating an affordable housing  
42 Internet portal. The commission will include the following 11  
43 members: two members of the Senate, one appointed by the Senate  
44 President, and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; and  
45 two members of the General Assembly, one appointed by the  
46 Speaker of the General Assembly, and one appointed by the  
47 Assembly Minority Leader; the Commissioner of Community  
48 Affairs, the Executive Director of the Housing and Mortgage

1 Finance Agency, the Executive Director of the Council on  
2 Affordable Housing, and the Chief Technology Officer, or their  
3 designees, who shall serve ex-officio; and three public members,  
4 who shall be appointed by the Governor no later than the 30th day  
5 after the effective date of this act, as follows: one person upon the  
6 recommendation of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, one  
7 person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of  
8 Counties, and one person upon the recommendation of a non-profit  
9 affordable housing advocacy group.

10 Under the bill, the commission will examine the feasibility of  
11 creating an affordable housing Internet portal which would include  
12 complete, up-to-date accounting of available affordable housing,  
13 including publicly supported housing, privately supported housing,  
14 and housing supported by non-profit organizations and religious  
15 groups. The portal will also include an affordable housing checklist,  
16 including links to information deemed necessary by the study  
17 commission and a streamlined application process by which  
18 individuals may apply for subsidized housing. Finally, the portal  
19 will include: the creation of an automated “chatbot” which can  
20 answer frequently asked questions in real-time and direct those  
21 seeking affordable housing to a hotline for additional information  
22 when necessary; the creation of a feedback portal which will be  
23 monitored to consider potential improvements for the internet  
24 website on a regular basis; and information available for  
25 municipalities on zoning best practices, including ways to integrate  
26 affordable housing into the existing municipal infrastructure.

27 The commission will conduct at least three public hearings, with  
28 one each to be located in the northern, central, and southern regions  
29 of the State. The commission may issue any interim reports it  
30 deems necessary, and will issue a final report of its findings and  
31 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.